



## **Barry-Roubaix** **Killer Gravel Road Race**

Kisscross Events, Inc.  
8915 Jewell NE  
Comstock Park, MI 49321

9-15-16

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

Kisscross Events is pleased to support the bicycle safety package before this committee. I strongly urge you to vote in favor SB1029, SB1030, SB1076, SB1077, and SB1078. Collectively, these bills protect vulnerable bicyclists, teach motorists on how to safely pass a bicyclist, and improve driver's education about bicyclists in Michigan.

Kisscross Events is a bicycle events company and holds several race or tours that use open roadways within the letter of the law. These events bring tens of thousands in dollars to Michigan's economy. Our largest event, the Barry-Roubaix attracts over 3000 riders from all over the USA and Canada and has had a local impact to the city of Hastings. Not just from the \$400,000+ revenue to Michigan's economy but improvements to the city and Barry county, including safe bike lanes, bicycle route signage, a mountain biking off-road trail, a tourist destination, etc. Our business needs safe roadways to thrive and these bills are sorely needed in Michigan.

Michigan lags behind other states in protecting bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users. In 2015 bicycle fatalities in Michigan increased a startling 57%. 2016 isn't even over and fatalities or crashes is still on the rise. So far we've seen 18 bicycle fatalities as of August 31. By supporting these bills, this committee is in the position to help minimize future senseless tragedies.

Let's start by improving driver's education. Michigan does not spend enough time teaching new drivers about bicyclist's rights and how to safely share the road. Failing to include bicycle safety in Michigan's driver's education classes endangers the lives of all roadway users. Dedicating an increased amount of time on bicyclist's rights should help and reduce crashes and fatalities.

Creating the five feet passing standard as the minimum distance sufficient to ensure safe passing and help prevent a driver from striking a cyclist from behind. Michigan is one of only eleven states without a law specifically requiring motorists to pass bicyclists safely.

Lastly, Michigan law already has enhanced penalties for drivers who injure or kill construction workers, children in designated school zones, and operators of slow-moving farm vehicles. It is time to recognize bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users as inherently vulnerable roadway users and give them similar protections. Pedestrians and bicyclists made up 21% of all roadway fatalities in 2015, a disproportionately high number considering they only accounted for 1.42% of all traffic

crashes. Enhanced penalties will further increase the standard of care for drivers around non-motorized roadway users.

As the president of Kisscross Events I am very encouraged at the extensive public support for these bills and the wide bipartisan support among the legislature. Thank you in advance for your leadership in supporting these common sense bills.

Sincerely,

Rick Plite  
Kisscross Events, Inc.